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STATE FOR AF/S (ELIZABETH PELLETREAU AND GREG GARLAND)

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

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SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: DEMARCHE ON ZIMBABWE TALKS

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1. (U) Acting DCM presented reftel points to MFA Permanent Secretary Veiccoh Ngiwete on Tuesday, July 29. The meeting was cordial and Ngiwete made clear that the GRN hopes the negotiations in Zimbabwe will result in a unity government. Nonetheless, he stressed that the GRN sees sanctions on Zimbabwean officials as counterproductive.

2. (U) Permanent Secretary Ngiwete thanked the Acting DCM for informing him of the U.S. position. He said the Namibian government adheres to the SADC and AU view that the participants in the negotiations must engage to find a solution that is amenable to all parties. He went on to say that the MDC did not win the 51% necessary to be declared the winner outright in the March 29th vote. He argued that one cannot throw the results of the second election out and simply declare Tsvangirai the president. He asked what law would that be: the "law of the jungle?" The Acting DCM replied that the March vote was a clear indication of the Zimbabwean people's desire for change in their country. However, the run-off, having been marred by violence, could not be an accurate measure of the people's view. Now that the talks are taking place, the U.S. hopes they will result in a transitional government that reflects the will of the people and focuses on reform.

3. (U) Ngiwete went on to say that the world community should give the negotiations in Zimbabwe a chance because, "We don't want to see another Kenya." He argued the West should give the parties to the negotiations breathing room and that sanctions could undermine their progress. He urged the U.S. to evaluate the history of its sanctions against Zimbabwe and whether they have resulted in any improvements for the people of that country. The Acting DCM replied that the U.S. is very concerned with the plight of the Zimbabwean people and therefore has continued to provide humanitarian aid and has maintained its trade relationship with the country. (Note: The PS seemed genuinely surprised that the United States still had trade ties to Zimbabwe. The Acting DCM explained that Zimbabwe had held a trade surplus until recently. End Note.) Nonetheless, we judge it is important to deny rewards to those individuals who commit atrocities or undermine democracy there. He reminded the PS that the Zimbabwe government is not allowing NGOs to distribute food to the people. The PS agreed that it has become a "very ugly situation," and hoped the negotiations would produce an immediate solution.

4. (U) The PS urged the U.S. to press Tsvangirai to come to an agreement with ZANU-PF. He said that while Namibia is a close friend to Zimbabwe, the GRN has limited influence over the

situation. He assessed that neither the MDC nor ZANU-PF could control the government in Zimbabwe, and a unity government had become necessary. He said the people of Zimbabwe do not necessarily think a Tsvangirai-led government is the best outcome, and therefore an inclusive solution would be the ideal. He went on to say it is important to continue encouraging the two sides to talk and he hopes the U.S. side will do the same. He hoped that the current impasse between ZANU-PF and the MDC that has been reported in the press is only an indication of tough negotiating tactics and that the parties will rise above their conflicts in coming days. He said he understood that Tsvangirai is negotiating from a position of power, but that Mugabe must secure ZANU-PF's position in a future government.

Mathieu